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# UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEVADA

In re:

Case No.: 22-14422-nmc

MUSCLEPHARM CORPORATION,

Chapter 11

Hearing Date: August 1, 2023

Hearing Time: 9:30 a.m.

#### DECLARATION OF TERI STRATTON IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION FOR ENTRY OF AN ORDER AUTHORIZING RETENTION AND EMPLOYMENT OF HILCO CORPORATE FINANCE, LLC AS INVESTMENT BANKER AS OF JUNE 6, 2023

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I, Teri Stratton, declare under penalty of perjury that the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief:

- 1. I am over the age of 18 and am mentally competent. I have personal knowledge of the matters set forth herein, and if called and sworn as a witness, I could and would testify competently thereto.
- 2. I submit this declaration (the "**Declaration**") for all permissible purposes under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Rules of Evidence in support of the *Application for Entry of an Order Authorizing Retention and Employment of Hilco Corporate Finance, LLC as Investment Banker as of June 6, 2023 (the "Application") and the <i>Agreement to Provide Financial Advisory and Investment Banking Services* (the "**Agreement**") between Hilco Corporate Finance, LLC ("HCF") and the Debtor, a true and correct copy of which is attached to the Application as **Exhibit 2**. Unless otherwise indicated, all capitalized terms used herein shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the Application.

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- 3. I am a senior managing director of HCF. In that capacity, I am authorized to make this Declaration on behalf of HCF.
- 4. I have 25 years' experience in advising on distressed sell-side and buy-side mergers and acquisitions transactions, recapitalizations, and restructuring transactions to middle market companies across many industries including in the food industry. Prior to joining HCF in 2022, I worked for Piper Sandler and Macquarie Capital Advisors (and predecessor firms). Before my investment banking career, I had eight years' experience in corporate banking, serving in both credit administration and special assets.
- 5. I received a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of California at Los Angeles as well as a Masters of Business Administration in finance, with honors, from the Anderson School at UCLA. I am a Certified Insolvency and Restructuring Advisor, an Association of Insolvency and Restructuring Advisors (AIRA) Distinguished Fellow, and a member of Turnaround Management Association, AIRA, and the American Bankruptcy Institute.
- 6. The Debtor seeks to retain HCF as its investment banking advisor because of the firm's recognized expertise and extensive experience and knowledge in investment banking services for a wide variety of industries, and specifically, in provision of such services in the Chapter 11 context. To effectively and efficiently proceed in its Chapter 11 Case, the Debtor requires the services of an investment banker to assist in conducting a sale and/or other strategic transaction.
- 7. HCF is a boutique investment banking firm affiliated with Hilco Global, a diversified financial services holding company with more than twenty specialized business units and more than 800 professionals throughout the world. HCF specializes in providing strategic advisory to middle-market companies. HCF has recognized expertise and extensive experience in providing investment banking services to buyers, sellers, and key stakeholders in a comprehensive range of complex transactions across a broad range of industries, including diversified industrials/manufacturing, packaging, eCommerce, and consumer products and services. HCF's professionals work closely with leading experts in asset valuation, monetization, business advisory, and capital solutions to provide comprehensive advisory services. HCF's professionals have

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successfully completed hundreds of financial transactions. As a result, HCF is well suited to provide investment banking services to Debtor.

8. HCF's professionals have provided investment banking services comparable to those to be provided in this Chapter 11 Case in a number of other large Chapter 11 cases, including CBC Restaurant Corp., VIVUS, Inc., Brinkmann, Golden County Foods, The Krystal Company, FTD Companies, Kona Grill, Ignite Restaurant Group, Eurofresh Farms, and Rotary Drilling Tools.

#### **Terms of the Engagement**

- 9. Subject to the Court's approval, the Debtor proposes to employ HCF to provide those investment banking services set forth in the Agreement, including:
  - a. Familiarizing itself, to the extent that it deems appropriate with the commercial, financial, operational, and legal circumstances of Debtor.
  - b. Identifying and recommending to Debtor potential buyers and capital sources in connection with a Transaction.
  - c. With Debtor's assistance, creating written materials (e.g., a "teaser," confidential information memorandum, management presentation, and form of Non-Disclosure Agreement) to be used in presenting the Transaction opportunity to prospective buyers and capital sources. Prior to distribution of these materials, Debtor shall review, comment on, and provide written approval for their use in connection with a Transaction.
  - d. Soliciting and reviewing proposals as well as making recommendations and advising Debtor in negotiating proposals concerning a Transaction.
  - e. Assisting Debtor in responding to the due diligence review of potential buyers, including by managing a Virtual Data Room ("VDR"), and assisting Debtor in organizing, populating, and maintaining the VDR.
  - f. Assisting Debtor and its other professional advisors in recommending and negotiating bidding procedures, a sale timeline, and auction guidelines.
  - g. Assisting Debtor in soliciting and evaluating acquisition proposals, including during an auction held pursuant to the bidding procedures.
  - h. Assisting Debtor and its other professional advisors in negotiating definitive documentation concerning a Transaction and otherwise assisting in the process of closing a Transaction.
  - i. As necessary, providing testimony and other litigation support services to assist Debtor in obtaining court approval of the bidding procedures, motion

to approve a sale, and other matters related to the sale process and Transaction.

- 10. Because HCF will have a well-defined role in this Chapter 11 Case, it will not unnecessarily duplicate the services provided by any of the Debtor's other retained professionals. Furthermore, HCF will work together with such other professionals to minimize and avoid unnecessary duplication of services.
- 11. The proposed terms of HCF's compensation are described in detail in the Agreement. In summary, HCF will receive an initial flat fee, a transaction fee, and reimbursement of its expenses, as follows:
  - a. Work Fee. An upfront work fee (the "Work Fee") of \$50,000.00 for initial services provided in connection with the engagement, which shall be fully earned upon payment and non-refundable;
  - b. Transaction Fee. A fee (the "Transaction Fee") upon the closing date with respect to, and as a condition to the closing of, any transaction or series of related transactions that constitute a sale or disposition to one or more third-parties of:

    (a) all or a material portion of the equity securities or membership interests of the Debtor or any interest held by the Debtor; and/or (b) any significant portion of the assets (including the assignment of any material contracts) or operations of the Debtor or any joint venture or partnerships or other entity formed by the Debtor, including any sale pursuant to Section 363 of the Bankruptcy Code and a Plan that either incorporates a sale of the Debtor's assets or equity interests in the Debtor or that is a "new money" Plan (as more specifically described in the Agreement, a "Transaction"), which Transaction Fee shall be paid directly out of the gross proceeds of the Transaction (or in the case of a credit bid without a cash component, other than assumption of liabilities, HCF will be entitled to an allowed administrative claim against the Debtor's estate), in an amount equal to:
    - i. 2.0% of the Transaction Value up to \$12,000,000;
    - ii. 3.5% of the Transaction Value if Transaction Value is between \$12,000,001 to \$15,000,000;
    - iii. 4.0% of the Transaction Value if Transaction Value is between \$15,000,001 to \$20,000,000; or
    - iv. 5.0% of the Transaction Value if Transaction Value is greater than \$20,000,001.
  - c. <u>Expenses</u>. Additionally, the Debtor will reimburse HCF for its reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the Agreement up to \$10,000 without the Debtor's prior written approval, including expenses related to travel, meals,

lodging, and attorneys' fees as well as ancillary costs such as research, printing, duplicating, postage and shipping, database access charges, and other miscellaneous expenses incurred prior to termination or expiration of the Agreement. HCF shall bill the Debtor monthly for its reimbursable expenses.

- 12. The compensation provision of the Agreement will survive expiration or termination of the Agreement with respect to fees and expenses due or accrued on or before the expiration or termination.
- above is (a) comparable to compensation generally charged by investment banking firms of similar stature to HCF for comparable engagements, both in and out of bankruptcy proceedings, and (b) reflects a typical fee structure for HCF and other leading investment banking firms, which do not bill their clients on an hourly basis, but are generally compensated on a transactional basis. The hours worked, the results achieved and the ultimate benefit to the Debtor of the work performed by HCF in connection with this engagement may vary and the Debtor has taken this into account in setting the above fees.
- 14. The terms of the Agreement were negotiated in good faith and at arm's-length between HCF and the Debtor, with input from the Committee and Empery, and reflect the Debtor's evaluation of the substantial work that will be performed by HCF. HCF's restructuring expertise, as well as its capital markets knowledge and mergers and acquisitions capabilities, some or all of which may be required by the Debtor during the term of HCF's engagement, were important factors to the Debtor in determining the amount of HCF's fees, and HCF submits that the ultimate benefit to the Debtor of HCF's services hereunder cannot be measured merely by reference to the number of hours to be expended by HCF's professionals in the performance of such services. Accordingly, the Debtor proposes that all compensation and expenses will be sought in accordance with Section 328(a) of the Bankruptcy Code and will not be subject to the standard of review in Section 330 of the Bankruptcy Code or any other standard.
- 15. An additional material part of the consideration for HCF's engagement is the indemnification by the Debtor's estate of HCF and its affiliates and their respective directors,

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officers, employees, agents, members and controlling persons against any claims or losses related to HCF's services under the Agreement, but excluding losses judicially determined to have resulted from willful misconduct or gross negligence. The indemnification provisions are fully set forth in Annex 2 to the Agreement.

- 16. I believe that the indemnification and related provisions set forth in the Agreement are additional reasonable terms and conditions of employment and should be approved under Section 328(a) of the Bankruptcy Code. They appropriately reflect the indemnification provisions typically utilized by HCF and other leading financial advisory and investment banking firms, both in and out of the Chapter 11 context.
- 17. HCF will maintain records in support of any actual, necessary costs and expenses incurred in connection with the rendering of its services in the Chapter 11 Cases. Because (a) it is not the general practice of investment banking firms such as HCF to keep detailed time records similar to those customarily kept by attorneys, (b) HCF does not ordinarily keep time records on a "project category" basis, and (c) HCF's compensation is based on a fixed rate and/or fixedpercentage, the Debtor is requesting that HCF's restructuring professionals only be required to maintain summary records in half-hour increments describing each professional's tasks on a daily basis, including reasonably detailed descriptions of those services and the individuals who provided those services. Moreover, the Debtor requests that HCF's professionals not be required to keep time records on a "project category" basis, that its non-investment banking professionals and personnel in administrative departments not be required to maintain any time records, and that it not be required to provide or conform to any schedule of hourly rates. To the extent that HCF would otherwise be required to submit more detailed time records for its professionals by the Bankruptcy Code, the Bankruptcy Rules, the Local Rules, or other applicable procedures and orders of the Court, or encouraged to do so by the U.S. Trustee Guidelines, the Debtor is requesting that the Court waive such requirements.
- 18. The Debtor also requests authorization to pay HCF's Transaction Fee for its services as and when due under the Agreement, provided that all such fees and expenses shall remain subject to the subsequent approval of the Court following the filing of a final fee application.

19. The Debtor seeks to employ and retain HCF effective as of June 6, 2023, in order to encompass HCF's preparatory work and provide a certain date on which the Agreement concludes. The Agreement provides that it shall commence on June 6, 2023, and shall continue until the earlier between: "(a) 12 months from the date hereof, unless extended by mutual agreement of the parties or (b) the date on which either party provides written notice to the other of a termination of the Agreement." In view of the posture of the Chapter 11 Case, including the pending motion for approval of bidding procedures, and the necessity of achieving the highest grossing deal within time constraints imposed by the Chapter 11 process, HCF began its evaluation of the Debtor's business and assets and other preparatory work on June 6, 2023, while final negotiations of the Agreement were ongoing.

#### **Disclosures Pursuant to Bankruptcy Rule 2014(a)**

- 20. The Debtor has supplied HCF with the names of its current and former officers and directors along with creditors and other potential parties-in-interest on the matrix attached hereto as **Exhibit 1** (collectively, "**Parties-in-Interest**"). To the best of my knowledge, based on HCF's ongoing review of its conflict databases, (a) HCF is a "disinterested person," as such term is defined in Section 101(14) of the Bankruptcy Code, as modified by Section 1107(b) of the Bankruptcy Code, and, as required by Section 327(a) and referenced by Section 328(c) of the Bankruptcy Code, neither holds nor represents any interest adverse to the Debtor or its estate, and (b) except as disclosed in this Declaration, HCF has no connection to the Debtor or to its significant creditors or certain other Parties-in-Interest, their respective attorneys or accountants, the Office of the United States Trustee, or any person employed in the Office of the United States Trustee.
- 21. Also, to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, none of HCF's past or current engagements would or appear to create an interest materially adverse to the interests of the Debtor, creditors, or equity security holders in the Chapter 11 Case and, as such I believe that HCF is disinterested and holds no materially adverse interest as to the matters upon which they are to be retained.
- 22. Due to the size of HCF, its affiliates, and the number of creditors and other parties involved in the Chapter 11 Case, HCF may have represented certain of the Debtor's creditors or

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- other Parties-in-Interest in matters wholly unrelated to the Chapter 11 Case. To the extent that HCF's review of its conflicts databases indicated that HCF has connections with any of the Parties-in-Interest or their respective attorneys or accountants, either currently or in the recent past, these matters are set forth below.
  - a. In matters unrelated to the Debtor, HCF and its affiliates have transacted or partnered with and/or have been represented by the following parties or professionals in matters wholly unrelated to the Debtor and this case: (i) Foley & Lardner, LLP, (ii) Portage Point Partners, LLC, (iii) Stretto, (iv) Barnes & Thornberg LLP, (v) Fox Rothschild LLP (vi) Kasowitz Benson Torres LLP, (vii) Pachulski Stang Ziehl & Jones LLP, (viii) Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP, and (ix) Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP. HCF does not believe that these connections create a conflict of interest regarding the Debtor or this case.
  - b. Hilco presently or in the past has served as a professional person in other matters, wholly unrelated to the Debtor or this case, in which other attorneys, accountants and other professionals of the Debtor, its creditors, or other parties in interest may have also served or serve as professional persons.
- 23. Because of the magnitude of the entire creditor list in this case, it is possible that Hilco may represent or may have represented other creditors of the Debtor but does not represent any such creditors in connection with this case. To the extent HCF's ongoing review of its conflicts discovers any facts bearing on the matters described herein during the period of HCF's retention, HCF will promptly supplement these disclosures.
- 24. Further, in accordance with Section 504 of the Bankruptcy Code, HCF has informed the Debtor that there is no agreement or understanding between HCF and any other entity for the sharing of compensation received or to be received for services rendered in connection with the Chapter 11 Case, except as among employees of HCF.

### Case 22-14422-nmc Doc 630 Entered 06/29/23 11:36:41 Page 9 of 15

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief. Dated: June 28, 2023. <u>/s/ Teri Stratton</u> TERI STRATTON 

### **EXHIBIT 1**

## **EXHIBIT 1**

Case 22-14422-nmc
Label Matrix for local noticing

Case 22-14422-nmc District of Nevada Las Vegas

Thu Jun 22 13:54:17 PDT 2023

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Atlantic Grain & Trade, LLC 496 BRAMSON CT UNIT 140 MT PLEASANT, SC 29464-7961 Doc 630 Entered 06/29/23 11:36:41 Page 11 of 15 CHAPTER 11 - LV

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STRETTO 410 EXCHANGE, STE 100 IRVINE, CA 92602-1331

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BJ's Wholesale Club, Inc. Attention Legal Department 350 Campus Drive Marlborough, MA 01752-3082 CHAPTER 11 - LV

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Case 22-14422-nmc Doc 630 Entered 06/29/23 11:36:41 Page 13 of 15 MP COLLATERAL, LLC 211 Leer St.

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Page 14 of 15
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